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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 000651

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DEPT FOR SA AND H

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/04/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [OREP](#) [CE](#) [LTTE](#)

SUBJECT: REPORTED TRAVEL TO LTTE-CONTROLLED TERRITORY BY
U.S. CONGRESSMAN

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JEFFREY J. LUNSTEAD FOR REASON 1.4 (D).

11. (C) Several Colombo Sunday (April 3) newspapers ran brief articles reporting that U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis (7th District - Illinois) had visited Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)-controlled "Wanni" region of northern Sri Lanka the day before. According to the articles, the group was received by LTTE police chief Nadesan. As of Monday, there has been no detailed reporting or editorial comment in the Colombo media although the visit was covered in some pro-LTTE Tamil newspapers. The pro-LTTE website Tamilnet is running a 21-picture "photo gallery" of the visit, including shots of the Congressman and his party visiting the LTTE "Heroes" cemetery. According to Tamilnet, Tamil National Alliance (TNA) Member of Parliament Joseph Pararajasingham accompanied Davis's party.

12. (C) The Embassy first learned of Congressman Davis's private travel to Sri Lanka late last week via an e-mail sent to the Embassy consular e-mail address by one of the Congressman's staffers. The DCM sent back an e-mail to the staffer advising that the Embassy would be pleased to see Congressman Davis and asking for details of his travel. We never received a reply to that e-mail.

13. (C) Congressman Davis's party called the Embassy midday Friday, April 1, to advise that they had arrived in Colombo and asking to see the Ambassador. An hour later, the Ambassador, DCM and consular chief met with Congressman Davis, Mr. F. Daniel Cantrell (the Congressman's district director) and with Dr. Somasundaram "Sam" Ilanogvan, an Amciti gastroenterologist from Davis's district who said he had emigrated from Madras to Chicago in the early 1970s. Ilanogvan said he had been in contact with the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO) about the post-tsunami situation.

14. (C) At the Congressman's request, the Ambassador briefed Congressman Davis and his party on the tsunami recovery process and on the "Tamil situation." On the latter topic, we reviewed with the Congressman the nature of the LTTE, its status as a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization and the murky relationship between the LTTE and the TRO. Congressman Davis made no mention of travel to LTTE-controlled territory (which, of course, we would have strongly discouraged). He did say he and his party were planning to travel to the Batticaloa area in the east and that the trip had been arranged by "several members of Parliament."

15. (U) The Embassy will draw from the following "if asked" press guidance if we are asked about the Congressman's travel to LTTE-controlled territory.

1Q. Can you comment on the travel to LTTE-controlled territory by U.S. Congressman Danny K. Davis (Seventh District - Illinois)?

1A. Congressman Davis was on a private, unofficial visit to Sri Lanka.

- Thus, his visit was not arranged by the U.S. Embassy in Colombo.

- Therefore, we cannot confirm the details of his "outstation" travel in Sri Lanka.

- You may wish to contact his office for those details.

- U.S. policy regarding the LTTE is unchanged: we consider them a terrorist organization and have no substantive contact with them.

16. (C) Ambassador discussed the visit with Foreign Secretary Paliyakkara April 4. Ambassador emphasized this

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was a personal visit and did not indicate any change in U.S. policy. Paliyakkara said he understood, that the visit was "unfortunate," but did not seem overly exercised.

17. (C) Comment. Needless to say, this is extremely unhelpful, especially since an Embassy political officer was in Jaffna last week among other things underlining our policy of non-contact with the LTTE. It is difficult to predict how stories such as this will play out in Sri Lanka. Somewhat to our surprise, this story seems to be dying out. End Comment.
LUNSTEAD